

Spartanburg

Mr. Pat Butler
Spartanburg Herald-Journal
Spartanburg, S.C. 29301

7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Md. 21701
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Dear Mr. Butler,

Please excuse my typing. I must sit with my legs elevated and type sort of side-saddle and I'm recovering from eye surgery, which impairs my vision and typing.

To describe what three former FBI agents told you for your story of November 20 as malarky is to praise it. They distort, misrepresent and are just plain wrong on the basics of what you quote. Please feel free to give them copies of this letter or, if your paper prefers, to use it and edit in any way you see fit.

Fletcher
Mr. Thompson was not "assigned by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover to direct the agency's investigation into the assassination" of President John F. Kennedy. Not in Dallas, not in Washington, not anywhere else.

The Dallas Special Agent in Charge was the late Gordon Shanklin. Under him the case agent in charge was Robert P. Gemberling. Sent from Washington to be in overall charge in Dallas was Inspector James W. Malley. In Washington the director was in charge and very much on top, assisted by his highest assistants. There then was no "criminal division" at FBI headquarters. Thompson was merely a supervisor in the criminal section of the general investigative division, then headed by Alex Rose.

bragged about
Mr. Rosen, I add, described that fabled investigation other than the three men you quote. According to an FBI record disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act, which I have used extensively to obtain previously withheld FBI records, he "characterized" that investigation as the FBI "standing around with pockets open waiting for evidence to drop in."

Whether or not Mr. Hoover "asked Thompson to see whether the FBI's power ~~to~~ investigate the assault on a federal officer applied to the president," normally the function of the General Counsel Division, long before such a legal inquiry could have been undertaken, leave alone completed, Mr. Hoover had himself decided it did not, according to a lengthy account of his own words prepared for him by his then head of the ~~mistitled~~ "Crime Records Division," Martha DeLoach. (I actually handled such functions as leaking and other disclosures, lobbying and defaming those the FBI did not like. It kept secret records of considerable extent on all the media, ~~long~~ many others - not by any means "crime records.")

Whether or not Mr. Thompson "flew his 25-page report back to Washington," it assuredly was not "a key resource of the Warren Commission" and it is less than the equivalent of a flyspeck in the volume of what the FBI dumped on that Commission. The "basic resource," identified by the Commission as its Document No. 1, was a five-volume report prepared at FBI headquarter and provided to the Commission

under date of December 9, 1963, days after the FBI leaked it and pretended that it was investigating to determine who had leaked it.

All these agents "believe" that "Oswald was the only gunman" but you do not quote them as acknowledging that nobody, not the best shots in the FBI, the best shots the Commission could get through the National Rifle Association, or the best shots used by others, including CBS, could duplicate the shooting they attribute to Oswald, rated by the Marines as a "rather poor shot." When the rifle did not misfire, that is, as it often did do. Not even after it was overhauled and improved, either.

Whether Brent Hughes is correct in stating that the FBI's "main purpose was to keep the Warren Commission from having to go to Dallas," even assuming that he meant the Commission members only, its staff having gone and stayed there in great number, it can be argued that the FBI's other purposes in preparing a scale model of Dealey Plaza was to talk the members out of going there.

Where ~~Mr.~~ Hughes is truthful, in saying that the FBI objected to the Commission's single-bullet theory/ substituted for irrefutable and unwelcome fact, he falls far short of full truth. The FBI knew that one such bullet could not have inflicted all seven non-fatal injuries on the President and then Texas governor John B. Connally. Neither the FBI nor any other agency working for the Commission even tried to duplicate this theory all knew to be impossible.

~~and~~ while all these agents pretend that they agree with the Commission's conclusions, in fact neither the FBI nor the Secret Service did. Beginning with the FBI's massive report I refer to above, it said that the first shot hit but did not kill the President, the second hit Governor Connally only and the third was fatal. Both agencies ignore still another shot of which both knew, one the Commission did not dare ignore and one of which both agencies knew because it was on the police radio, which the FBI transcribed for the Commission, ^{was reported} and reported, with pictures, in the newspaper - the one that inflicted a slight wound on bystander, James Tague.

It was to keep the number of shots down to three, already a known impossibility, under those established conditions, that the Commission hoked up its single-bullet theory. Supposedly I have obtained from the FBI all the relevant records of headquarters and the Dallas and New Orleans field offices and there is no record in them in which the FBI undertook to inform the Commission that ~~this~~ ^{it} theory was impossible.

Instead Robert Frazier, a headquarters firearms expert, testified that he could and did duplicate Oswald's alleged shooting- which he did not and could not do.

The Commission's singlebullet theory "shook" more than us "critics." It shook the late conservative Senator Richard B. Russell to deceive whom the words "not necessary to any essential findings of the commission" were inserted in the summary.

The transcript of the executive session in which Senator Russell and another

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member raised their objections was replaced by an inaccurate ^{paraphrase} summary. From the time I placed a copy in Senator Russell's hands until his death he encouraged my investigation of his Commission's investigation.

Hughes says that "if the (Kennedy) family would allow an unbiased forensic pathologist to examine just one photograph of President Kennedy's back wound, we could know for sure exactly where the first bullet struck." *He doesn't know what he is talking about,*

The Kennedy family ^{denied} never ~~gave~~ the Commission access to anything at all. The FBI refused a copy of the autopsy protocol when it was offered and it never did get the official certificate of death. I found all copies hidden in the National Archives by misfiling and published it. It could not be more specific in locating that wound, as the autopsy body chart also did, slightly to the right of the third thoracic vertebra. This is five inches down on the back, exactly where the clothing pictures show it was.

That the fabled FBI, on its own initiative, did not seek the certificate of death is, I think, a fair characterization of the intended failures and omissions in its investigation.

And, of course, qualified medical experts, including pathologists, have examined what ~~Mr.~~ Hughes says was never examined.

Perhaps Mr. Hughes did report that "if the bullet hole in the body ^{of} matches the bullet hole in the coat and shirt, as it surely must, the bullet could not have exited the throat," but if he did the FBI kept it secret and testified to the exact opposite to the Commission.

Hughes should know better than to refer to criticism as "conspiracy theories" and to limit his mention of conspiracy to theories. Conspiracy is a matter of fact, not theory. Quite separate is conjecture over whom the conspirators may have been. He is wrong, however, in saying that the first shot could have been much earlier than in the Commission's account. That bullet, truly a magic bullet in the official accounts, was testified to by Firearms Examiner Frazier. He testified that if the bullet had struck coarse cloth or leather, which are not nearly as hard as three branches, they would have made microscopic marks he would have detected and he detected ^{such} no microscopic marks at all on this bullet. (I'll return to this.)

He is utterly ridiculous in saying that "a puff of smoke seen by many coming from the grassy knoll can be explained by a car backfiring." Such a car would have to have been moving on its side or atop a fence, the slope of that knoll is that steep and the location of that smoke ^{is} so far up it or at the fence, The precise location is not known, thanks to the FBI's refusal to investigate it.

Agent Paul Stombaugh was assigned to the laboratory where he was what the story does not make clear, a hair and fibres expert, although it does say he examined them.

He states that there was much blood on the limousine floor and that they "found bullet fragments in the blood." That they were found ^{in pools of blood} ~~there~~ ^{was} not previously stated ^{and is not in} to the best of my knowledge ~~or~~ the reports I've read. However, what he does not say and what the FBI should have ^{and did not do} ~~done~~ ^{was} to examine the blood on those fragments to determine whether the blood type of both the President and the governor were present or whether they had been planted ^{because} the Secret Service had searched the car before the FBI did and did not find those fragments. In fact, the FBI got some fragments from underneath a jump seat. The Connallys were sitting on them at the time of the shooting, which makes one wonder how the fragments did get there.

Nor was the "magic" bullet ~~tested~~ to see whether the blood of both victims was on it. ~~In fact, it was not even tested to determine whether there was any blood on it.~~ Even though the FBI knew it could not have inflicted those ^{alleged spectacular} ~~seven~~ wounds in its ^{career} ~~career~~, ~~nor equaled even in mythology.~~

For Mr. Hughes and the others to say that "the throat wound could have been caused by bullet or bone fragments" is a ^{virtuoso} ~~display~~ ^{display} of ignorance or, given their expertise, mendacity. There is no other bullet ^{that could have} ~~to have~~ fragmented and the "magic" bullet is virtually pristine. The fatal shot was later ^{when} ~~that~~ the President ^{reacted visibly} ~~reacts~~ to the wound in his throat ~~and~~ ^{the} ~~bone~~ base of his skull was intact. That no bone could have caused it thus is ~~also~~ ^{also} obvious. Moreover, in what they say did not happen, an examination by forensic experts - ^{and these were the} ~~the~~ ^{their} ~~department's~~ ^{of} Justice's own forensic ~~experts~~ ^{experts} - bullet fragments were identified ⁱⁿ ~~at~~ the neck area ⁱⁿ ~~from~~ the X-rays.

"Hairs on the (Oswald's) blanket matched Oswald's, further cementing the link between Oswald and the blanket," these demon investigators are represented as saying. What hairs is not stated. They were his pubic hairs, ^{and what a fantastic presentation,} complete with cross-sections and dissertation on ~~the~~ ^{an abstract} ~~arcane science~~ ^{of} Stombaugh prepared for the Commission, and what ~~a~~ ^{display} it made of this irrelevancy in its Report!

When the blanket was indubitably Oswald's, beyond ^{why} ~~any~~ question, ^{to make this his did not} ~~what~~ was it necessary ~~to all to examine~~ those public hairs? They "cemented" nothing except the deliberate deceptiveness of the FBI's misuse of science. ~~And~~ ^{who} ~~in~~ the world should have cared whose pubic hairs were on Oswald's blanket other than his wife?

Mr. Stombaugh is quoted as saying he has no questions at all and that Oswald was entirely alone. He knows better.

Under the Freedom of Information Act I got from the Department of Justice what the FBI withheld from the Commission, clear photographs of some of the President's clothing, particularly of the front of the shirt collar. In the Report the Commission says, supported by testimony it took from the FBI itself, that the magic bullet

entered the back of the President's neck. In this it lied, to the permanent silence of the FBI and all its agents who knew better. Of whom, from one of my Freedom of Information ^{Committee} cases in which I deposed Agent Frazier under oath, ~~Mr.~~ Stombaugh personally is one. Before this bullet ^{by} alleged engaged in unparalleled gymnastics at close to 2000 feet per second inside and outside of governor Connally, it alleged ^{it} went through the shirt collar and nicked ^{his} the tie at the ~~upper left-hand extreme of the knot, as word.~~

^{important evidence} In its wisdom the FBI untied the knot, the knot, not the tie itself, ^{having} being the ^{of the tie} ~~only clear picture~~ ^{it made a} it gave the Commission, ^{evidentiary} of a counterfeit knot with this damaged ^{about} perfectly centered in it. Exactly what is essential to the fictional history of ~~this bullet~~ whose career in the official investigations would have made Aesop and the Grimm brothers ^{enviously} inordinately jealous.

(In fact, the FBI had a minor industry of untying and retying the knot. It was retied for testimony before the Commission by many witnesses, ^{including the FBI's. It was} then untied again when I got a court order for pictures of the shirt and tie to be made for me, Then it was tied again for use by witnesses before the House Select Committee on Assassinations, ^{have over} have over, Houdini- make room for the FBI and its laboratory scientists.)

Now this FBI laboratory photograph of the front of the President's shirt, this photograph from ~~Mr.~~ Stombaugh's own shop, leaves it beyond any reasonable question that the damage to the ~~shirt front~~ ^{neck band} is not from ^a bullet ^{or} ~~hole~~ ^{are no bullet holes there}. There are two slits. Neither coincides with the other. One is higher, ^{extends} by much, the other longer, ^{also} by much. ~~Magic indeed!~~ And neither comes close to coinciding with the ~~damaged~~ spot on the tie, ^{which is not at the center but at the upper left extreme as worn.}

Thus, in FBI science, we have an even more magical bullet: it makes slits, not holes, and it maneuvers so magically, faster than the speed of sound, that it makes slits that do not coincide while going through a buttoned shirt collar and then manages to inflict no damage at all to the cloth between the center of the shirt collar and its most extreme and higher front edge on the left side, where the tie has this minor damage.

I showed this photograph to Agent Frazier when we deposed him and asked him to ^{what I account above} account for ~~slits instead of hole~~, ~~slits that do not coincide with each other or with the damaged point on the knot of the tie.~~ ^{He} ~~twice testified~~ ^{under oath} that he had had questions about this and that he had referred the picture for the proper study of it and the shirt ^{who had said he has not questioned at all} by this self-same, unquestioned, Oswald-alone-did-it expert, Paul Stombaugh, ^{Stombaugh's} his called for a hair-and-fibers written report.

But it does not exist! Not in the Commission's evidence, where Mr. Stombaugh ^{in testifying} made no mention at all of this test he was directed to make. Not in those hundreds of thousands of pages of FBI records I have. Not even in the court case in which Mr. Frazier testified to it.

my pool
 this ~~lead~~ ^{cover} Not necessary to investigate as true subject located." This was typed, researched, annotated, ~~and even index~~ ^{of} and filed ~~before~~ ^{of} Oswald was even charged. In Washington the Acting Attorney General, as soon as Oswald was safely dead and it was certain there would be no trial, wrote the White House, that "The public must be satisfied that Oswald was the assassin; that he did not have confederates ~~who~~ ^{who} are still at large; and that the evidence was such that he would be convicted at trial." ~~This was~~ ^{the} ~~when the FBI first worked~~ ^{the Dallas FBI first worked} ~~on this case~~ ^{on this case} ~~before any real investigation could have been conducted.~~ ^{obviously} This was before any real investigation could have been conducted.

When on the first working day after the assassination Eastman Kodak invited the Dallas FBI office to ~~examine~~ ^{still and motion} (assassination pictures) it was processing, still and motion picture. Agent Milton L. Newsom went, returned and reported that the motion pictures failed to show the building from which the shots were fired. "This, too, was before any real investigation could ~~possibly have concluded that all~~ ^{be made to establish any of all} if any of those shots came from that building. ~~However,~~ ^{However,} there are 87 individual pictures of not only that building - of the very window from which the FBI claims all shots were fired ~~and at close to the moment of the shooting.~~ ^{just before instant} There is nobody in that window. He said of the 35 mm. picture, clear and taken with a Leica, that although ~~they~~ ^{it} "did depict the President's car at the precise time shots were fired; however, the pictures were not sufficient ^{by} clear for identification purpose." In plain English, the FBI didn't want it because it did not show Oswald with a smoking gun. All it showed was the President being killed. ~~as it had no value to the FBI~~ ^{it kept what it had} or it didn't ~~get either sets of pictures~~ ^{get either sets of pictures} and later, when asked to investigate them by the Congress, ~~stood malled for years and then quietly didn't do it at all.~~ ^{must be there}

"There are a million unanswered questions," your subhead states, quoting former FBI Agent Hughes, "No one will ever know the truth."

The FBI itself saw to it that there would be these lingering, troublesome questions but there now is no real question about the FBI's performance. We now do know the truth about that.

These agents and others defame those of us who are critical of their work, accuse us of theorizing conspiracies only. Mine has been a long and detailed study not of any whodunit but of how the basic institutions of our society worked or failed to work in that time of great stress and since then. The conclusion is ~~clear~~ ^{clear}: obviously, ~~that~~ ^{our} ~~our~~ ^{our} institutions failed and ~~continue to fail~~ ^{they} and thus they endanger our system and freedoms. These three agents ~~have helped clarify this sad record of failure~~ ^{have helped clarify this sad} when our system was nullified by an assassination that had the effect of a coup d'etat.

They allege the critics conjecture. + don't. They still do.

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